

Kashmir and Hyderabad*

Phillips Talbot

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Both India and Pakistan have made long strides toward stability since winning their freedom from British rule in 1947. What are the prospects for stability in the immediate future, and for their exerting a steadying influence throughout Southeast Asia?

Despite the disorganization and bitterness that accompanied the partition of India, the two young Dominion Governments have thwarted severe early threats to their internal security and have restrained their respective extremists from precipitating a war on the sub-continent. They have each proceeded with political reorganization of the largest populations extant — since the disintegration of China — in non-Communist Asia. Other Asian nations have tentatively accepted the leadership of India in such international issues as Indonesia. In an Asia hardpressed to adjust to new conditions, the future roles of India and Pakistan may have critical importance. One or both may consolidate a position as a new Power in Asia, where a steadying influence is needed. The extent to which the closely interdependent Dominions can achieve such status, however, depends on their further progress toward internal stability and more amicable mutual relations.

Although the obstacles remaining in the way of internal and inter-Dominion security are far less critical than those that confronted the governments immediately after independence, they are still impressive. A flow of reports emphasizes the continuing sharp economic dislocations, the social upheaval within the aroused peasantry and working classes, and the political and administrative unbalance resulting from partition. The Dominion Governments can grapple with these problems, however, only in a miasma of fear, suspicion and hatred that has blocked agreement even on mutually advantageous policies. Hardly any issues have more seriously clouded the atmosphere than the controversies over the disposition of Kashmir and Hyderabad,

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the two largest Princely States of the Indian sub-continent. These struggles have not only exacerbated Indo–Pakistan relations and thus stood in the way of necessary working relationships, but in each Dominion and State have also consumed energy and material resources urgently needed elsewhere. Only India’s military intervention ended a protracted struggle by Hyderabad groups to keep their state independent, while Indian and Pakistan troops still held face-to-face positions in the Kashmir mountains in 1949 while a United Nations Commission sought a compromise. Tentative solutions have now been reached in Hyderabad and marked out in Kashmir. Their final success would brighten the whole aspect of southern Asia.

II

It is not surprising that a few Princely States should have ignited post-independence fires. For many years earlier, political advance had stumbled over the problem of the States, that complex of 562 scattered entities which then functioned as a counterpoise to the restive Provinces of British India. They remained a major difficulty even after World War II when Britain, exhausted at home and confronted in India with revolution and civil strife, determined to relinquish the Crown’s once “brightest jewel.” Constitutional lawyers declared an end to British paramountcy, the device by which the States had been subordinated and integrated into India despite their legal autonomy. This interpretation was based on legalities and on commitments previously made to Indian Princes by British Monarchs. It posed to each new Dominion the problem of organizing not only the provinces falling under its jurisdiction but also the Princely States lying within or alongside its borders. To recognize the autonomy of hundreds of States within the sub-continent would have been to accept national chaos, for no rational separation of Provinces and States was possible in geography, strategy, communications, or economics, not to speak of political administration. Yet, each State ruler was given technical freedom to join either Dominion or to stand aloof from both. The noteworthy fact is not that some trouble resulted, but that peaceful settlements were made with all but three States. The handful of States within Pakistan quickly reached agreements with Governor General Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s Government. The bulk of the remainder acceded to India under the persuasion of Deputy Prime Minister Vallabhbhai Patel and of Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy.

Of the hold-outs, Junagadh, a small Principality in Western India whose Muslim Nawab had made the tactical error of acceding to distant Pakistan, was brought into line and eventually absorbed into a regional administration under India. That left

Hyderabad and Kashmir.

The struggles in both Kashmir and Hyderabad have both been characterized by communalism, i.e., the distinctive form of controversy that sets off one social community (*e.g.*, Muslim) against others (*e.g.*, Hindu and Sikh). Often this is interpreted as religious strife. In part it is, and no doubt exists that religious fervor is a powerful and fanatic impulse especially when riots break out. The anarchy which followed partitioning of the Punjab Province in 1947 caused ten million people to flee their homes in Northern India. Muslim refugees struggled toward Pakistan, while Hindu and Sikh refugees from the West sought the protection of India. Many thousands were murdered only because they were identifiable as Hindus or Sikhs or as Muslims. Yet communalism is more than a religious phenomenon. Its social and economic overtones appear when peasants who happen to be Muslims are oppressed by Hindu money-lenders or when Muslim weavers strike against Hindu mill owners. In recent years a more important aspect of communalism had been the struggle for political power. As British authority weakened, the Indian National Congress party's majority bid to inherit power was effectively challenged by Jinnah's separatist movement, which labeled its opponents as Hindu communalists. At a cost of casualties running into the hundreds of thousands, communalism came to epitomize the Indian political struggle. Hyderabad and Kashmir fell readily into the same pattern, especially as the Muslim Nizam's subjects were predominantly Hindu while the Hindu Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir ruled mostly Muslims.

III

The Nizam governed Hyderabad largely with a Muslim elite class that spread like a thin crust over the State's population, which was 87% Hindu. The Muslim nobles sought an independent Hyderabad that would stand on equal international footing with India and Pakistan. Indian Dominion leaders judged their national independence a mockery without Hyderabad, which was imbedded within Indian territory. Pakistan discerned in a free Hyderabad a useful Muslim ally vis à vis India. The political problem was whether one of these viewpoints could gain predominance without plunging the subcontinent into renewed strife.

Hyderabad advanced strong arguments. With 82,000 square miles and 17,000,000 inhabitants, it compared with Korea or Yugoslavia. The Nizam made a case for his right to rule independently, when freed of the strictures of British paramountcy, by virtue of British declarations and of legal status stemming from the eighteenth century. In 1713 an ancestor, the Mughal Governor Asaf Jah, had

attained *de facto* freedom from the Imperial Government at Delhi. These factors of territory, population, and sovereignty, the Nizam argued, constituted nationhood.

The State was nevertheless vulnerable to the political tides of India. Landlocked, it was completely dependent on India for import and export facilities. Nor could it hope to become independent even under an announced ten-year billion-dollar scheme of industrialization. The Hyderabad peasantry, eking out a living on uncertainly watered soils, reported an even lower literacy rate than the Indian average. Political workers from outside the State found the peasants responsive to nationalist (and, to some extent, Communist) agitation. One Muslim Prime Minister was dismissed shortly after warning the Nizam's Government of rebellious tendencies among Hindu subjects and urging the Ruler to placate them.

Advocates of the Indian case argued that Hyderabad was unquestionably a part of India. Its people were Indian, its history was Indian, its territory lay entirely within Indian precincts. The position of Hyderabad raised important strategic considerations. Spread over the Deccan plateau, it lay athwart main communication lines from north to south. Indian statements revealed a fear that "foreign interests," by which they transparently meant Pakistan, might use an independent Hyderabad in fomenting trouble against India. Arguing that Hyderabad was an issue "involving the defence of India, the integrity of her territory, the peace and security of the country and above all the common interests of the State of Hyderabad" itself, India forthwith rejected the Nizam's *firman* which proclaimed his "Resumption of independence" when the British withdrew. New Delhi made clear its determination to bring the State within its orbit regardless, as it later declared, of "mere legalistic claims of doubtful validity."

The struggle for control of Hyderabad had begun earlier. After World War II, when British departure was plainly imminent, the Nizam kept his army at war strength. Limitations in constitutional changes of the same period brought on a political agitation by the Hyderabad State Congress Party, the local agency of the Indian National Congress, supported by the Communist Party. In opposition, a militant Muslim organization, the Majlis Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen, built a fighting arm called the Razakars. Like other armed bands then breeding in India, this was intended as a private army. Its role was to support the Muslim ruling class against upsurges of the Hindu majority; in fact it intimidated many villages. Later the Communists switched fronts to attack Congress groups. Communist activities, according to New Delhi, contributed to India's subsequent decision to intervene in Hyderabad.

In this atmosphere of disorder, negotiations proceeded between the Indian Government and the Nizam. They had reached no agreement by independence day, when British paramountcy lapsed. Three successive prime ministers represented

Hyderabad in the struggle against the implacable demands of India's Vallabhbhai Patel. In October, 1947, one negotiating committee for the State agreed to a stand-still agreement that would extend for a year the arrangements that had been in force between Hyderabad and the British Crown Representative in India. Muslim mobs in Hyderabad City prevented members of this committee from returning to New Delhi to sign the document. They demanded nothing short of full independence. A month later a new committee found itself obliged to sign the same agreement. Within another two months India was accusing Hyderabad of violations. The Nizam, in his part, complained with justice that his state was being blockaded. His agents failed to obtain shipping space for many supplies for Hyderabad. The Indian government did not admit the blockade, and denied that normal quantities of drugs and other medical supplies were being held back.

Conditions within Hyderabad and relations between the State and New Delhi deteriorated during the first half of 1948. Lord Mountbatten, who had directed the transfer of power from Britain to the Governments of India and Pakistan, failed to resolve the Hyderabad impasse. A further contretemps occurred in June when the Nizam disavowed an agreement which provided the substance but not the form of accession and which had been initialed by his negotiators. This set the stage for the final act. By now India had raised its demands. It insisted that the Nizam not only accede but also establish responsible government, leaving himself only as constitutional head of state. The Muslim elite of Hyderabad were increasingly determined to resist these demands, which meant their liquidation. The Razakars intensified their activities. Outside of Hyderabad Indian newspapers carried on a campaign of vilification against the Nizam, while in Pakistan the press attacked India with equal vigor. Indian Muslims pleaded with the Nizam to yield so that majority Hindu groups in India would not attack Muslims and renew the communal rioting which had died down after Gandhi's assassination. Finally, in September, the Indian Army marched into Hyderabad on the ground that the breakdown of law and order in the State threatened the peace of South India. The troops met no significant opposition.

The successful "hundred-hour war" gave India full control of Hyderabad. The Nizam was kept on his throne, though his power was sharply curtailed and his lands have since been nationalized. An Indian military governor mopped up resistance and laid the basis for an interim government and a constituent assembly. The Nizam, who was now under Indian influence, disavowed a Hyderabad complaint that had been laid before the United Nations and denied the substance of a Pakistan communication which protested against India's invasion and the "iron curtain" that was said to conceal Indian "excesses" in Hyderabad.

Indians were surprised at the severity of criticism that came from many parts of the world after the military action. Even supporters in the Government of Gandhian principles of nonviolence had finally approved the action, and they vigorously denied the charges of imperialism. Beginning with the premise that Hyderabad is part of India, they argued that they had exhausted all other means of settling the controversy before resorting to arms. Whatever may be said of the means employed — and several members of the United Nations Security Council criticized them — subsequent events demonstrated that the *de facto* resolution of the Hyderabad issue was followed by relaxation of communal tension in India and by closer national integration.

IV

The dispute that turned the Himalayan State of Jammu and Kashmir into a high-altitude battleground evoked broader forces than were visible in Hyderabad. Unlike the Nizam's Government, the Kashmir regime was a pawn in the struggle for control of its territory. The chief contestants were, and remain, the Indian and Pakistan Governments, with latterly a United Nations Commission as mediator. Any solution in Kashmir can be ratified only in the Dominion capitals and will affect not only the State itself but relations between the two young nations.

When British rule ended, Kashmir, like Hyderabad, delayed accession to either new Dominion. The Maharaja's hesitation exposed a more awkward and confused situation than existed in any other Princely State. The national partition had been effected on the theory that contiguous Muslim-majority areas should go to Pakistan. Kashmir, bracketing the upper frontiers of both Pakistan and India, had 73% Muslims. Its trade was linked to cities and communications lines in Pakistan. Pakistan therefore considered Kashmir within its hegemony; indeed, in one version of the origin of the word *Pakistan*, the "k" stands for Kashmir which was from the beginning conceived as an integral part of the future Islamic State.

The Hindu Dogra Maharaja and the small Brahman and Dogra ruling classes were expected to, and did, recoil from linking Kashmir to the avowedly Islamic Dominion. Pakistan leaders did not regard this opposition as definitive, especially after the Muslim Nizam of Hyderabad had been impressed into relations with India (which Jinnah's followers continued to regard as "Hindu-stan," despite India's repeated claims to official secularism). They could not so easily dispose, however, of the tenacious resistance against Jinnah and Pakistan of Kashmir's largest political party, the Kashmir National Conference, which was Muslim-led and largely Muslim-supported.

The Conference had long associated with the Indian National Congress. Its leader, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, had developed close and friendly relations with the Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru, who is himself of Kashmiri descent.

Abdullah recognized the difficulties in store for his State. At an early stage, when the luxury of a semi-neutral view was still possible, he observed: "We cannot line up with one Dominion against the other. Unless we have peaceful relations with both India and Pakistan, Kashmir is finished."

The problem failed of settlement, however, because Kashmir is strategically so placed that neither Dominion felt able to yield its interests there. Whichever nation controlled Kashmir could flank the other's frontier in a military action. Furthermore, with Kashmir abutting Central Asia and looking on Soviet territory, each Dominion felt domination of the outer passes a matter essential to national security.

Within Kashmir deep-rooted social and political conditions affected the pattern of events. The beautiful valleys and rugged mountainsides support an impoverished, illiterate and insecure population of peasants and herdsmen. These unprivileged Muslim villagers have long depended mostly on the Brahman and Dogra classes for governmental favors and trade essentials. The unequal relationship between rulers and ruled led naturally to communal bias when political consciousness spread to Kashmir in the 1930's. A countering factor, however, was Abdullah's popularity. Abdullah had risen to prominence in a rebellion against the Maharaja in 1931. Thereafter, in intervals between jail terms during the next 15 years, he organized an agitational movement that finally included Hindus and Sikhs as well as thousands of Muslims. During the war he raised the banner for a socialistically conceived "New Kashmir" in which the Maharaja's authority would be drastically reduced. Until after Indian independence he was still in jail on a sedition charge for having led a "Quit Kashmir" campaign against the Maharaja in 1946. In the meantime he had continued his close relations with Nehru and the Congress Party. Jinnah's followers called Abdullah a tool of the Hindus. They were frankly communal. Revitalizing the Kashmir Muslim Conference, in which Abdullah had once been active, they developed a program generally in opposition to both the Maharaja and Abdullah. When the political pace quickened as independence approached, therefore, Kashmir was caught up both in communalism and in interparty maneuvering.

Kashmir could not escape the frenzy that seized the neighboring Punjab province on the advent of independence and partitioning in August 1947. Refugees from outside, both Muslim and non-Muslim, carried tales of terror into the State. As in other parts of northern India, Hindu and Sikh gangs attacked Muslims in some centers while elsewhere Muslims rose against non-Muslims. In the Kashmir fiefdom of Poonch, where the population is Punjabi Muslim, Dogra troops of the Kashmir

State Army dealt vindictively with turbulent villages. The stage was set for a large-scale explosion, which promptly occurred.

The immediate detonation was caused by Pathan tribesmen from the Northwest Frontier Province to the west of Kashmir. They entered the State intent on revenge against Hindus for attacks on their co-religionists of Kashmir. As the Pathans were one of the most uncertain elements in the generally anarchic situation, some Pakistan officials welcomed their diversion into Kashmir as lessening the threat they might otherwise offer to Punjab villages. Food, gasoline and military equipment were made available to the tribesmen going to Kashmir.

To Pakistan enthusiasts the fight in Kashmir quickly took on the appearance of a Muslim struggle for independence against the Hindu Maharaja and his government. Pakistanis besought their leaders to send regular troops to help the fight. Individuals and groups of soldiers took up the cry. Major Khurshid Anvar, deputy commander of the unofficial Muslim League National Guards, led an expedition intended, as he later declared in press interviews, to seize the Kashmir valley and Srinagar, the capital.

Almost the first impact in October shattered the Maharaja's tiny army and State administration. Muslim elements of both deserted in large numbers when the on-rush of tribesmen, Pakistan sympathizers, and in-State Muslims entered the main Valley of Kashmir. With a quick plea to India for help, the Maharaja fled to Jammu. The Indian Government promised to send troops as soon as the Maharaja signed an Instrument of Accession to India. This was done within the hour, but even before the Accession reached New Delhi Indian air-borne troops were being flown to the Srinagar airport, which was already endangered by the outsiders and insurgents. Later an Indian official declared: "We saved the air field, and thus the whole situation, by just 12 hours." The action officially committed India to the war in Kashmir.

Thereafter Kashmir was effectively bifurcated. Indian military operations gradually restored the authority of the legal government over the Kashmir Valley and its approaches, and also over the Ladakh highlands and parts of Jammu Province. This remained roughly the area of control throughout 1948. New Delhi caused the Maharaja to establish Abdullah (who had been released from jail only a few weeks earlier) as head of the Administration. Abdullah functioned in close liaison with the Government of India and Nehru, now the Prime Minister. Meanwhile in parts of Kashmir not cleared by Indian forces, civil administration was drawn under control of the former Kashmir Muslim Conference, which now styled itself the Provisional Government of Azad (Free) Kashmir, and worked closely with Pakistan. In the summer of 1948 the Pakistan Government revealed that its army general staff exercised overall command of regular and irregular Azad forces. Kashmir was thus the scene

of a war between two nations who were officially at peace.

While military commanders directed battles in passes more than two miles above sea level, the controversy between India and Pakistan became one of the many issues with which the United Nations sought to deal. India complained against “unwarranted aggression, at first indirect and subsequently direct, of the Pakistan Government on Indian Government territory in Kashmir.” She argued that no plebiscite or other solution of the Kashmir issue was possible until tribesmen, raiders, and other incursive elements had been cleared out of the State. While classifying the Maharaja’s act of accession as provisional, India insisted that it was legal and that until some agreed settlement was achieved there could be no diminution of Indian sovereignty in Kashmir.

Pakistan, in its rebuttal, denounced the “fraudulent procurement” of the Maharaja’s act of accession by India. Pakistan also asked the United Nations to consider the Kashmir issue in the context of all the controversies between India and Pakistan.

Throughout the diplomatic maneuverings, India placed emphasis on the legality of her position in Kashmir and the illegality of Pakistan’s intervention. Pakistan, arguing at a different level of abstraction, laid great weight on religious, cultural and economic factors. The principle of some internal test to determine the will of Kashmir residents in respect to final affiliation was accepted by both Dominions. The issue became not whether, but how, a plebiscite should be held. India urged that as the sovereign power she should conduct any referendum. Pakistan demanded strict international precautions to insure an “honest” vote. This was the crux of the dispute, for spokesmen on either side indicated confidence that a plebiscite held in the way they preferred would result favorably.

After detailed examination of the two briefs, the Security Council passed a lengthy resolution on April 21, 1948, which opened the way for a five-nation Commission to seek a settlement in Kashmir. For the remainder of 1948 this Commission worked to achieve a cease-fire agreement and truce. India complained vigorously against third-nation observations made in the Security Council, while Pakistan rejected the United Nations Commission’s proposals put forward on August 13, 1948. Not until the beginning of 1949 was a sufficient area of agreement reached for the two countries to accept a cease-fire arrangement. By then new forces were at work in Southern Asia, and had come together to protest Dutch action in Indonesia. Whether cooperation on that issue helped substantially to moderate views on Kashmir remains to be seen.

Basic issues remain to be resolved in Kashmir. The terms of a plebiscite are not yet settled, and difficulty is to be expected in designing mutually satisfying methods and controls. How, for example, shall it be determined that all non-residents (i.e.,

Pathan tribesmen and Pakistan or Indian nationals) have left the State, and that all *bona fide* refugees from the State have been returned for the vote? Should a single majority dispose the whole State, or should the vote be on a regional basis to make partition possible in the event of conflicting trends in different districts? What is to happen if one or both Dominions declare frauds to have occurred in the polling? These are matters that will be determined by the political climate existing between India and Pakistan and by international action rather than by conditions within Kashmir.

Viewed in their correct proportions, the Hyderabad and Kashmir controversies are phases of the power readjustment that inevitably accompanied Britain's withdrawal. The struggle between the heirs had begun as soon as it became clear that no single party could achieve dominance over the whole sub-continent. For the most part these power conflicts were fought out around the conference table, and it is to the credit of the negotiators — British, Indian and Pakistani — that in settling the details of partition they averted overt jurisdictional conflicts in all the Provinces and in nearly all the States. They failed in their task to the degree that Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir became inter-Dominion crises.

With Junagadh and Hyderabad now under effective Indian control, Kashmir remains the principal threat to peace in the sub-continent and therefore to the contributions toward stability that India and Pakistan could make to Asia. Leaders of both Dominions and spokesmen for the rival Kashmir factions have recognized the danger. The cease-fire agreement achieved in January 1949 is a start toward peaceful settlement. More substantial compromises are necessary, however, for final agreement. If, perhaps with the further assistance of the United Nations Commission, India and Pakistan are able to adjust their ambitions in Kashmir, they can turn their attention to more fundamental problems and opportunities.